

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 /070 W

-----070989 102354Z /70

R 101258Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1969

INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, RH, BC

SUBJECT: RHODESIA RAILWAYS EMPLOYEE ARRESTED FOR POSSESSION
OF AMMUNITION

1. RHODESIAN AND BOTSWANA MEDIA HAVE REPORTED ARREST OF
RHODESIAN RAILWAYS MANAGER IN FRANCISTOWN, MR. BRIAN LINN,
ON CHARGES OF ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF AMMUNITION. LINN WAS
ARRESTED BY FRANCISTOWN POLICE MARCH 21 UPON HIS RETURN
FROM A VACATION IN RHODESIA.

2. DCM DISCUSSED LINN CASE WITH SECRETARY TO CABINET STEEN-
KAMP DURING MARCH 30 MEETING. STEEFKAMP SAID THAT, PRIOR
TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR RHODESIA, LINN HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS
FOR HIS STAFF TO THOROUGHLY CLEAN HIS QUARTERS. WHILE
CLEANING WAS IN PROGRESS, LINN'S GARDENER, WHO REPORTEDLY
HAD GRUDGE AGAINST HIM, FOUND A FEW LOOSE ROUNDS OF
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AMMUNITION AMONG HIS POSSESSIONS. GARDENER THEN COM-
PLAINED TO POLICE WHO ARRESTED LINN UPON HIS RETURN.

3. ACCORDING TO STEENKAMP, A TOTAL OF SEVEN ROUNDS OF
AMMUNITION (2 AK-47 TRACER ROUNDS, 2 NATO 7.62 ROUNDS,
1 ANTI-AIRCRAFT MACHINE GUN ROUND AND 2 MISCELLANEOUS
ROUNDS) WERE FOUND AMONG LINN'S EFFECTS. LINN REPORTEDLY

HAD A NUMBER OF POLISHED AND MOUNTED USED SHELL CASINGS WHICH INDICATED THAT HE COLLECTED SUCH OBJECTS AS A HOBBY. AS IF TO EXPLAIN LINN'S ARREST FOR AN APPARENTLY TRIVIAL OFFENSE, STEENKAMP TOLD DCM THAT PRESENCE OF AK-47 TRACER AMMUNITION AMONG LINN'S EFFECTS TOUCHED SENSITIVE NERVE IN FRANCISTOWN WHERE POLICE MOBILE UNIT CAMP WAS ATTACKED USING SUCH AMMUNITION IN EARLY 1977.

4. STEENKAMP CONFIRMED MEDIA REPORTS THAT RHODESIA RAILWAYS IS PUSHING FOR AN EARLY RESOLUTION OF LINN'S CASE. ACCORDING TO STEENKAMP, BOTSWANA'S HIGH COURT WILL ASSUME PRIMARY JURISDICTION IN THE CASE. LINN COULD FACE VARIETY OF CHARGES INCLUDING CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT TREASONABLE OFFENSE WHICH CARRIES MANDATORY MINIMUM 15-YEAR SENTENCE IF CONVICTED. HE COULD ALSO BE CHARGED WITH LESSER OFFENSES, SUCH AS ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF AMMUNITION (MAXIMUM PENALTY OF 2 YEARS IN JAIL AND PULA 400 FINE).

5. COMMENT: LINN CASE IS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF BOTSWANA'S TOUGHENING POSTURE ON SECURITY-RELATED OFFENSES, PARTICULARLY THOSE INVOLVING RHODESIAN OR SOUTH AFRICA CITIZENS. CHANGE OF VENUE FROM FRANCISTOWN TO HIGH COURT IN LOBATSE SHOULD BENEFIT LINN BY REMOVING CASE FROM HIGHLY CHARGED FRANCISTOWN ENVIRONMENT. MOREOVER, GOB IS LIKELY TO PREFER LEAST SERIOUS POSSIBLE CHARGE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PARTICULARLY IF RHODESIAN RAILWAYS WEIGHS IN HEAVILY TO ASSIST LINN. EVEN IF LINN IS CONVICTED OF SOME OFFENSE, HIGH COURT IS VERY UNLIKELY TO HAND DOWN STIFF SENTENCE IN SUCH A TRIVIAL CASE.
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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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